

# An Interview with Harold Oaks



Brigham Young University

Department Chair, Theatre and Media Arts

1980-1993

I am Harold Oaks, born here in Provo, Utah. I lived in Uintah County then was raised in North Ogden, Utah. I graduated from High School at Weber High then came to BYU, did my undergraduate work, and interrupted that to go on a mission to Holland and Belgium. I graduated in 1960. I did a master's immediately afterwards, and then went to the University of Minnesota where I did my doctoral work. I taught for two years at a small college in upstate Maryland and for another few years at Kearney State College in Nebraska. I taught for two more years at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Then I came to BYU in 1970. I was asked to chair the department in 1980. I stepped down as chair in 1993 and retired from BYU in 2002.

### **Theatre Tradition**

I believe theatre's tradition, going all the way back to the Greek period, establishing the use of taking on a character and thereby demonstrating what happens when one thing or another occurs is essential to what happens in film, in fictional film particularly. Being able to draw on that heritage is crucial. Film is able to take those images and that ability and look, in some ways, more carefully at it because you can do a close up, and you can focus attention in other ways and on other things that will strengthen the image. The heritage of character development and imagining what is happening, can happen, or has happened, is the major contribution.

The basic structure, in terms of the way that a narrative develops, is something that comes originally either from theatre or from the novel, and obviously that is something that is used a lot in film because there are so many films that are based on those earlier formats. The experimentation that's been done by particular artists in the past I think has been a stimulus for things that can happen in film.

Will there be a day when everyone has thought of everything? Well, I'm reminded of when the head of the patent office in Washington DC, about the turn of the century, said they ought to close the patent office, because everything had been invented that could be invented. Look at what's happened since then.

It is also true in theatre and the experimentation of going to theatre in an arena format, for example. You're just focusing on the actions of the characters way of looking at that. Yet at the same time when you use spectacle with that, you put an actor on a mountain side, there is an impact that comes because of the setting in which it's working with. That's true with a stage set that's set so well, and the stage design itself comments and reinforces or by contrast may juxtapose what is happening. I think that film exploits that so well, because the film can take us wherever we want to go and create that image so well and so clearly. That, I think, can be very helpful.

### **Impact of the Art**

There was a period of time when I was working as department chair, and faculty members in the department didn't want to have a curtain call. They wanted to leave the audience with the feeling they had at the end of the production. I always objected to that, because I felt like, look, we're not dummies. We're sitting watching this theatrical event happen on stage. At the end we'd like to express how we feel about that event and about what has happened there. To assume that we just can't do that, applaud and still hold that image in our minds, I think that's not valuing the intelligence of the audience. I think that we can keep the two ideas there at the same time. Film is able to do this, I think. You don't have live actors, you don't have anyone to respond to, and yet, there are times when you want to be able to respond. The impact, I think, can go either way. It just depends on the people that are involved, and where they're coming from.

I have the capacity. It's an innate thing that I notice everybody doesn't have, to be able to get lost in what's happening on stage, or lost in what's happening on the screen. I identify with the characters, I identify with the situations, I identify with all of those elements and yet, I can drop out of that at the end of the show and still have it. I know that because of being able to do that during the performance time. Whether it's on screen or on stage, I can recall that and recall how I felt at that time. I think I take it with me, and in some ways reenact that in my mind. Maybe in the middle of the night in a dream or maybe just thinking about a particular person or a situation or being reminded of that in a situation that I'm in. Plato disagreed with that. He thought that if you allowed that emotion to enter, you were destroying the rational approach to things; and that's where we part ways.

### **Theatre and Film related to Faith**

The contrast of those points of view (Plato and Aristotle), I think, depends on the individual; what their training and background is and experience is, whether they feel comfortable with emotional involvement in that setting. I think it's very difficult in a church setting to avoid that and I think that one of the things that we find when we're moved by stories or illustrations, that are given even in sacrament meeting or a situation like that, that there is an emotional involvement there. It is an identification with what is described to us. I am reminded of my mother's reaction when I was way back in Junior High School and I told her that I was interested in going into theatre. And she said, "Oh! That's what they do in the temple. They teach by roleplaying to be able to teach the information." She and my father had been very active doing genealogy and other things and at that time, all of the roles were played live rather than the film, which didn't come out until the Swiss temple.

Since then, I have thought that one of the difficulties sometimes is that the person watching the film can get lost in the film experience, rather than in the information that is being conveyed. The spectacle rather than the information. Part of that has to do with the nature of film, which takes us there immediately and more completely than it does when someone is in a suit assuming character, and is clearly not the character. I think that's an interesting way of saying, well, what is your purpose? Where do you want to go with this? How do you want to do this? Okay, but if you did those films with the characters, that wouldn't work either. We'd be concentrating so much on the opposite element that it wouldn't work either. So, I think that both can work and both can be very positive, and I think you do have to be careful that you don't take it over the edge.

You have to be working with the spirit, and you have to have your life in tune to be able to do that. Keith Merrill has struggled a lot with that and has written about it and talked about it a great deal, as have others. I really believe that it ultimately goes back to your being able to deal with that because of the well that is there, which is deep and well-founded spiritually, so you can handle it and make those decisions. We do everything we can, but ultimately it has to be a decision that comes from within. There was a period of time in the department when our Department Chair, after I stepped down, wanted to have the administration at the University tell us what was appropriate to do. I think that if we are in a position where we want someone else to tell us what to do, we ought to leave. We ought to be living and observing what is happening well enough that we make a decision on what is appropriate for us to do. If we have a question about it, we may want to talk to someone about it, but the decision ultimately must be ours. Otherwise, we should be somewhere else.

In my view, it goes back to what President Kimball said in the 1970s, that he felt we should be producing our own Shakespeare and whatever other genre we're working with. I think we have trouble, when we're not spiritually in tune, being able to understand how this world view

over here and a spiritual view here can be brought together. That there's part of it that there's not going to be in it. Part of this may not be part of it, but those two can come together and it can reinforce and strengthen.

The arts are a way to understand even ourselves. Brigham Young, when asked at one point about theatre and about why he built the Salt Lake Theatre before the temple was finished, for instance, said, "If I had people on a desert island, and I wanted to civilize them, I would build a theatre so that they could see the consequences of choices that are made." I think that's key. That's what film is capable of doing as well as theatre. It allows us to make choices and then be able to see those choices and what the consequences are as a result.

I look at something like *Fiddler on the Roof*, where I have a much greater and more sympathetic understanding of Jewish culture and wellbeing as a result of having seen the play and the film. I understand how people from that culture see the world around them and how they adjust to things that aren't ideal. I see what they are able to do both individually, and to see the humor in the situation as well. There are dozens of films or experiences like that whether on stage or on film, which allow me to expand my view of the world that otherwise would be very provincial.

### **Establishment of the Film Department at BYU**

I came to BYU in 1970, and came hired by Lael Woodbury to work in Theatre Management. I was in charge of the box office and things in that area. I also taught a whole range of courses. Albert Mitchell retired a couple of years in and I then went into the Theatre for Young Audiences area, which I emphasized from then on. Chuck Metten became Chair of the department in 1975. Previously, the department had been called Speech and Dramatic Arts when I came in 1970. By 1975, the name of the department had been changed to Theatre and Cinematic Arts, and this, I believe, was part of what Chuck Metten wanted to do in terms of shaping the department and developing a film program. A couple of years later, in 1977, Tad Danielewski was hired. He came from a background that reflected his work in professional theatre and professional film. Because he had done some work in that area, they were able to set up a film major in the department, as far as the structure was concerned, within three or four years, that could include either history and theory or directing, writing, or acting. Tad had a workshop, the actor, writer, and director workshop that he pioneered and worked with.

When I became Chair in 1980, that's the kind of structure it had. The structure itself showed that the Communication Department was also working in this area. They were interested particularly in television rather than in film itself. In fact film was kind of cumbersome, because you have all that film that you had to work with rather than working with tape. So they weren't sure that they wanted to continue a film major at all. When Lael Woodbury called me as Department Chair, one of the charges that he gave to me was that he wanted to see a film program developed, and see it move forward. Well, it took quite a while to be able to do that, but I took the charge seriously, and started working and researching things. I went down to USC and UCLA which were premier programs then, in the early '80s, and as I visited there with those programs, I was working to try to get a pattern that I felt would work well. We knew that we didn't have the kind of resources that they had available for the students to work with, and we had to come up with something that was going to work with what we had to do. We knew that we had a top rate studio, sitting out in the river bottoms, but we didn't have access to it at that time. Although some of our faculty went out and did some film work out there, really the only faculty member we had that had any connection with it at that point in 1980 was Tad Danielewski.

Chuck Metten was very interested, had some historical background and had done a little bit of work in the field, but didn't really have a background in that, he was really theatre.

When Tad Danielewski came, the philosophy of education at that point appeared to be what I would refer to as a theatre training mode. In theatre education at that particular time, and pretty much to now, the idea is that a faculty member chooses a show, a faculty member directs the show, a faculty member designs the show, both costume and set, and the students are involved as kind of apprentices working with it and watching what is happening and then acting in the show. But they really don't do crucial decision making on the productions that are major work. There was a real hierarchy and the hierarchy focused more on the faculty than it did on the students in my view. I felt that it really needed to focus much more on what the students did and the students work, and I saw that enforced as I visited USC and UCLA. Getting that into operation was a little harder, because all of the technical material that was available, the camera work, editing and everything like that, which are essential artistic elements to what's happening here, were located over in another department, in Communications. It meant that eventually those had to come into our department so we had control of them and we had to have enough money to be able to take care of the equipment and other things to make that happen. We also had to get faculty members to be able to back all of that up.

The crucial part of getting the program started was, well there were a couple of things. One was: The budgets were always limited. There was never enough money to do everything. That has changed a little bit, because you have a grant there that you can work with, but at the time we didn't have any other resources outside of the limited amount that was there. So as an administrator, what I had to say was "Okay, I want to do this. What discretionary money do I have?" That means outside of salary money and things that are absolutely essential to operate the department, and "How would I get departmental position," which were extremely difficult.

The University was restricted by the church on the number of positions that they could have, because the finances for the church were tied up with that. A faculty spot is a major commitment, and it's a long-term commitment. So getting a faculty slot or even a staff position is very hard to do, but you'd look at ways to try to do that. For example, in the early '80s, personal computers were coming online in a way that we could utilize them. I worked with the Dean to get the money and initial grant to be able to buy computers, Macs, for everybody in the department that wanted one. I had some faculty members that refused to get them, because they were new and they didn't want to change. But I got enough computers into the department that I freed up a staff position in the office. We didn't need someone to type up all of the tests and all of the papers and everything for the faculty, because they could do it themselves on their own computer. It was that kind of trade off where I would get a position or I would get money or I would think of a way to do something. Sometimes you could go to the Dean and get some money from him to do some extra things or a special grant to do a project if you could think of a way to really look good. You did everything you could. An administrator, a good administrator, is going to be working to try to do that.

### **Expanding the Department's Influence**

Before I was Chair, I was asked to look at the department, and chart if I were Chair where I would take it. I looked at every faculty member, and tried to look at their strengths, what they could do, and where I thought it could go. I was frustrated in a way with Theatre, because it is ephemeral, that is, it is done once and it's gone. There is no record beyond people saying, "Well, I remember seeing that." It is very elusive, and because of that, the only audience we were serving with theatre was Utah Valley. The Church, at the same time, is expanding and going all

over the world, and we don't have a way of reaching out and supporting the Church to be able to do that. Film is a way to do it. It can travel and it can go to different languages. I mean, that's the reason why they went to film in the temple. It was because you could dub it or you could put script under it if you had to. Dubbing was what they chose to do. It meant that we needed to look at the larger picture, and that was one of the things that I was really interested in. I wanted to see that happen and make it possible for us to do so much more than we could do otherwise.

I did work on expanding our reach consistently for the twelve years that I was Chair, for the reason that I just stated. I felt like it was important that it be developed, and I thought that was where we needed to go. I could not get the Theatre faculty in the department unified to be focused on where we needed to go. It was very hard. I tried to do it, and yet it seemed like everybody was going on their individual routes and wanted to develop their individual programs rather than saying, "This is where we need to go as a department." The things that I really like about the faculty members in film, as that came together, was that they were focused on doing it together. There were workshops held and other things that I would go to, and I was just really excited, because they were looking at the whole and they were looking at where it was going and what the students would be doing and how they would work together. That was exciting! I would do whatever I could to get resources to be able to support that vision and what was happening there. That frustrated others, and when Eric Fielding became Chair after I stepped down, he really was upset that I had done that so consistently over that period of time. But I felt good about it. I could live very happily with that.

I still feel that way. I think there's a place for theatre, but I think that it's a more limited format than it was fifty years ago. I believe, partly because of the area that I'm in, that theatre for young people is one area that needs to be addressed much more aggressively. The department recently has moved more in that direction, which I see as positive. There's another reason for that: the adult audience material that is now available to us is inappropriate for the University. We can handle what is there for a child audience or for youth much more appropriately than we can for adults. I still feel that film is one of the places that we should be emphasizing. I think we should do more writing than we've done and that we should explore all the material that we can work with. With all of the television channels and other things, the outlets have just exploded and it's continuing to explode with YouTube and Facebook and everything else that's there. Unless we stay on top of this, we're going to be left behind. It's obvious with what the Church is doing that they are pushing those borders and trying to move out in those new directions. We just worked on our mission in public affairs in Germany this last couple of years, and they're not looking at where things are, they're looking at where things are going. They are trying now to keep up with that. Let me tell you, if we're not doing that at the University, that's what we should be doing. We should be leading, not trailing afterwards.

### **Changes in the Department**

The name of the department changed three times during the time that I was Chair. When I came in 1980, it was called Theatre and Cinematic Arts, and that had been changed when Metten became Chair. In 1986, we absorbed the Speech program, from Communications and it became Theatre, Speech, and Cinema. That was only for a couple years. Then in 1988, it became Theatre and Film, which it remained until it became Theatre and Media Arts. It was obviously a transition period. That '80s period to 1993, which was when I was Chair, had a lot going on, and not only in our department, but also in the technology, what was happening in the industry itself, and then the technology that was occurring with the internet, with all kinds of communication that impacted what we were doing as well. Even things like what video format to work with, whether

you're going to do Beta or VHS. That was a fight. There was a whole period of time where we wondered, "Which way are we going to go?" That was going on during that whole period, a very exciting time, and it's still going on.

It would have to be approved each time the name of the Department was changed, except that the whole process of getting things approved at that time was much looser than it is now, in every way. It was easier to get a faculty member hired. It was easier to get a faculty member advanced. It was easier to get programs and courses and other things in, because they didn't always see the long range implications of what happened. The other thing is that from 1950-1970, the University just exploded in terms of students. It went from about 5,000 students when I came as a student in 1954 to 25,000 by 1970, and 30,000, which they finally capped it at, by 1980. Because of that explosion in students, they had to have an explosion in faculty, and sometimes they hired just whoever they could get. Some of that lopped over into the '70s and to that early period. Dallin Oaks came in 1971 and was there until 1980. He tried to bring some of those things in line. One of the major things that he accomplished while he was there was getting faculty salaries raised so that we could compete for faculty, for quality faculty from other institutions and other places. So you didn't look out at the mountain and say, "Well, that's part of your salary." Then you could start being selective, because you had enough money to be able to buy them, to match the salary they were getting somewhere else. During that period there was a refinement that came, and by 1980, things were starting to tighten up in all of those areas, and you had a better background.

They've continued to tighten, and we're looking more like an Ivy League School now certainly than we did before. That's very good in some way, because the quality has been raised. In some other ways it's restrictive, because there are some people that are really experimental and are not academically based in our field, which we ought to be able to hire and bring on and utilize with energy and commitment.

### **Tom Lefler**

Tom Lefler is an example of that. He is not on a faculty line, he is on an administrative line. The reason for that is they couldn't match salary or keep him if he were on a faculty line, because he didn't have the academic credentials. But he obviously has the professional credentials to be able to make this program work, and has been crucial in the development of the program.

I was trying to find him in the catalogs as I reviewed them, and tried to locate where he was, and as I said, he's on an administrative track rather than on a faculty track, because he came from the studio as the studio downsized. We were fortunate to be able to get him. He is a person that is interested in other people, and in fact is more interested in other people than he is in himself. Because of that, he was the personification of what I wanted as a faculty member, because he cared about making the project work for the student. He would kill himself to get the resources, whether it was camera or lighting or sound or whatever it was to be able to capture that vision the student wanted to have. To see that kind of excitement and dedication was just a thrill to me. He came with that and I had been disappointed since I stepped down as Chair that he didn't get the kind of attention and support that I felt would have been good for the program to make it go, the kind of attention that he deserved and that he would have been able to use to advance the students and the program as a result. He didn't always get that, which I thought was unfortunate. In spite of that, he continues to do it. He's low maintenance, and ideally so. He is able to do both models of teaching. There are others that are, "Just go out and do your project," instead of looking at that other side and realizing that if you're going to work for somebody, which most of us are going to do in film, whether its commercial or doc or whatever it is, that there must be

control there, and that you must take responsibility for being sure that control is there. Not rely on somebody else to come and do it for you, but that you have an internal control over what is going to go on.

You need people that can be able to unify all those in order to make it work. So that the artistic project comes to fruition in a way that is envisioned and hopefully, the vision will be had by all of those that are participating in it.

### **Sharon Swenson**

Sharon brought a view of film that was in many ways similar to Tom's, and they worked well together. Because they were able to work well together, she coming from the historical, theoretical side, he from a practical side, they worked well to bring those two units together. Sharon was a delight to work with. She was willing to understand the points of view, and I could work with her and I could say, this is what I'm trying to do. It may work and it may not. We'd try to work out what was going on and what worked well. I think she brought real strength to the program, she brought an academic tenure to it. She also had a view that I think strengthened the whole program, not just in the academic area, but also in the production area. She could sit down and watch the film and help critique and help see beyond the technical elements into what the key story was. She was able to see even of failure the things that were positive of what was there. She was a great hire. She and Tom were crucial in that. There have been a number of others that have been good, but I think that in terms of the direction of the program and where it was going and shaping the program, she was also crucial. She is intellectually very sharp, but she's also spiritually sensitive. I remember during the time that I was working with her, she was working as Relief Society President in her ward, which brought a level of humanity into the way she viewed other people and viewed what was happening; which the Church does, if it's working the way it should. That strengthened the whole situation. Tom worked as a Bishop, and because he served as a Bishop, there was a level of spirituality that came because of that.

### **Peter Johnson**

Before Peter, the Chair was Tad and kind of Metten. Peter Johnson came in about 1982, which was when he appeared the first time in the catalog. He came, actually, from a television background and brought more professionalism and professional contacts into what was happening. We had Carl Malden come and do some film work and particularly theatre work and other things. It was a step in the right direction then, but we didn't really have on the staff the kind of things that I felt we needed.

Peter Johnson was recognized, because he worked in the industry. He brought something with him, because if he suggested something, then people listened to him in a way that they hadn't before. He was asked to do some Church film work, and because of his contacts that way, he built a connection system within the Church hierarchal structure. Church filmmaking became more professional, which "Judge" (Wetzel Orson) Whitaker brought in originally. By this time, Judge was not working out there the same way that he had been earlier, and the motion picture studio was really struggling. It was difficult during that early period, especially during the '80s, to do anything out there, because everything had to be cost accounted. They had to be able to pay for whatever was happening. We didn't have any money to pay for it. They couldn't go out and make films at the studio, it was simply too expensive. There was no budget to be able to do it. We were able to bring some of the staff members out there over to teach part time. Bob (Robert) Stum came over and taught and we had some others that would come over and do training and things. Then some of our students were able to work on films out there as apprentices and learn



that way, and so there was an exchange that was beneficial. But we really didn't have control over it.

We still had the apprenticeships, because we had to. We didn't have anything else to work with. When Peter came, he brought that kind of thing. The temple films that were done during that '80s period, he was heavily involved with that. We had students and faculty that were involved with that as well. It helped advance the whole idea of a film program at BYU, I believe. It allowed that exchange of seeing, well, this can help the Church, which we hadn't had as far as theatre was concerned. We had some really early on, but we didn't during this period of time as there was a transition occurring as far as the Church was concerned and everything else. Then Peter went out there and managed the studio for a period of time. There were some additional exchanges that came because of that, which continued to help us and continued to move things forward.

### **Brian Sullivan**

Brian Sullivan came in 1984, and his focus was on the technical side, and being able to do film work and to do the other things that are related to that. We started developing that other side that was needed to be able to make the students able to do film. Up until that time, if they were going to do film, they took a Communications class, and by doing that then they got access to the equipment room and to an 8 mm projector and to the slicing boards and other things over there to be able to put a film together. It was really archaic and was really difficult to do, and difficult to gain access to the things that were there.

At this time, you have someone like Keith Merrill coming out of the Comms program, and getting an Oscar for *Great American Cowboy*. So there was some track record there, but the Communications Department didn't pick up on that. They were going the other direction, towards television. Then they realized that they were scattered all over the place. I mean, look at the catalog offerings during that time. They were doing a little bit of everything. Finally they decided they really needed to focus, and one of the things that they were going to jettison was anything that had to do with 8mm film and things. So we picked it up, but we didn't have really the resources available to do it. It was kind of a period of time picking that up and trying to get some things. We really didn't get things going in that area until personal video cameras and things came along so that we could do them.

Well, we finally got someone like Brian Sullivan who had experience in the area, and he came in and worked at it for a couple of years; he was only there from 1984-86, and then he decided he really wanted to go and do his own thing. But he did get a sense of professionalism on the technical side, which I think was extremely important in starting to move things forward; and which remained. It meant that we were able to go from that. Paul Nibley came after that.

### **Paul Nibley**

Paul brought some professional experience, not as much as some others, and contributed. He was really interested in what the students were doing. I think he was more focused on what was happening with the students. The student should be the product of what we're doing in education, and if it's something else other than the student, we missed the point. My view was that we really needed students doing projects, that we needed the student to be the focus of the training where the faculty member worked as an advisor to the student rather than working the other way around. I think that Paul really helped advance that model and was able to move that forward. He had cooperation at that point; it had moved far enough that we saw that was going to be helpful in moving the whole thing forward. Again, you'd try to find resources to try to make

that happen, whatever it is, wherever you feel like it's going to go and be successful. All of this time there was communication with the film people to try to keep me up to date, to help me understand what was happening and help me understand how we could help them.

All of this was at the same time of my trying to balance the theatre people and help their needs as well. I think there is a strength there, between theatre and film, that some other film programs around the country don't have because they've lost that relationship and they end up focusing on some of the other things that are less substantial.

### **Learning from Mistakes**

I had a good friend Joe Bentley in graduate school at the University of Minnesota; he did a project for his doctoral dissertation. He took a postulate that some things happened as a result of other things, and that was his whole theme for his thesis. And it wasn't true. So when he had finished, he had done all of this work and put all of this energy and effort into making the assumption that he wanted to prove out, and it didn't. I talked to him once about it and I said, "Well, you must be really frustrated," and he said, "No, My advisor said, 'You plugged a rat hole. What you did was you found out that wasn't what it was.'" That's research. I think that that's true in the arts as well. That some things work and some things don't.

I think the key with terrible movies is how the person sees what they've done. If they do not see the product for what it is. If they do not see that it failed, that it didn't do what they wanted it to do. If they continue defending it, and do not have an honest view of what it is, I think it's probably because they haven't learned. They have not progressed. If they see it and they understand this didn't work and they're able to say, "These are things that I did wrong or this doesn't work that way," then I think they've learned and then I think it's useful. Then they're worthy of our respect. To some respect it's whether or not they have the insight to see what has really happened.

I think when we've done the project, or periodically while we're doing it, we need to be able to step back and look at it and say, you know, "Is this working?" We need to evaluate what's happening, or when the product is finished, look at it and try to step back, try to get yourself emotionally out from it, and look at it and say, "You know, that just didn't work." Or "That worked, but this didn't." We need to be able to evaluate it that way.

### **Sterling VanWagenen**

I worked with Sterling VanWagenen closely in the early '70s. He worked with me on a production of a play called *Dance on a Country Grave*, which was an alliance with a casting agency in Los Angeles. He was working on that production at the same time that he was working with Chuck Metten on a stage production for the American College Theatre Festival. I wanted Sterling to go with me to Los Angeles when we took the production down there. Metten refused to let him go. Sterling was an actor and an assistant working with the production. He was never just an actor. He has a creative mind that is really exciting. He came through the program then went out, as a result of having contacts up at Sundance and other things, I kept in touch with him and he would come down, especially when he was working as Chair later. He came in when I was teaching Introduction to Theatre and talked about keeping track of current developments in the field and other things. So there was a continuing and kind of ongoing thing, and he would come in and he'd teach some individual classes, primarily worked as an advisor and a stimulator, but he was doing a lot of other things. I always admired what he was doing and the imagination and the excitement that he would bring when he came.

David came a little later in '89, as far as the catalog was concerned, he also, I think carried on and had the vision of having the student doing the work. By the time he came, we had gone enough into the camera, the magnetic camera, instead of having the film work, and he was crucial in being able to move us in that direction; to be able to make that transition, between handling film and being able to do it on the computer. The technology, by that time, had caught up and Hollywood was ready to go in that direction as well. It was vital that we be able to make that transition and make it work.

I think it is possible to get carried away with the technical side and with all of the tricks you can do with the camera. I think we're going through that right now with 3d, I think it is one of those tricks, it is one of those things. I don't personally think it is going to last, because that's not what the film is about, you know, having something leap out at you from the screen. It's about the content of the material, not about how you do it. That has always been a problem with theatre. They over design the show and it takes away what's happening, what you want them to focus on, and I think that's always a danger, and I think it will continue to be because we will continue to advance, as far as the technology. You have to keep pulling back. You have to do both, really, you have to push out and experiment with those things to be able to push the borders forward, but you can't live there. And I think you have to do both.

### **James D'Arc**

James is an artist at doing what he does. He is a person who is able to envision what can be with an archive and with personal contact with those who have achieved in the field one way or another. He was able to make that available and lay what is essentially a foundation on which a program, a really stellar program, can be built. Jim has that kind of vision and brought it in at a very early age. He was in his early twenties when he first came to BYU. With that vision, he was able, with tremendous skill, to go out and talk legends in the industry into participating in what was happening here at BYU. To be able to go down and get the DeMille archive, and at the same time on that end, with the industry, to deal with it and be able to talk him into doing it, and then to come back and convince the University to commit the resources to having an archive like that. To dealing financially with the responsibility of having the archive and making it available for the public, not only here but internationally, is astounding, given where we were at the time that he started working. You get Jimmy Stewart's archives, you get the DeMille collection, you get Loraine Day, you get a number of them. We've gotten a number of film, music, and other areas like that. It was an archive that laid that kind of foundation. It also attracted national and international attention. People said all of a sudden that's where you go to get this information. That can't help but raise the stature of the program and to be able to get it a foundation that it needed. He came over for a couple of years to the department as a faculty member in the early '90s, and he was there for a couple of years and then the library threatened to not replace him with an archivist to be able to do that. He felt so strongly about the archive and understood what was happening that he said, "No, I can't do this anymore. You replace me in the department and I'm going to go back and take care of that archive." He realized that they would lose much more than we would lose if we lost him in the department and got another faculty member to come in there.

### **The Bigger Picture of Film**

To have a good program, the whole has to work together to be able to succeed. You need to be able to convince the University of your worth, in that ultimate, larger sense. Jim, as I said, I think has been crucial in being able to do that within the library and with the University

Administration. The other things that he's done, even looking at the research he's done on Mormons in Film and the kinds of things he's done with that. We need to pay attention to that and fund that. It's deeper and much more important than public relations. The view is something that reaches far beyond that. Even to look at the change that he is able to illustrate by the film work that was done in the early 1900s and look at what is done today; even though we have the Book of Mormon running on Broadway, as satirical work, to have Mitt Romney and Huntsman running for President of the United States, for heaven sakes. Then having an advertising campaign running in New York, now, of "I'm a Mormon", and have it in Time Square and all over the city in New York is a demonstration of a major shift in attitude. A lot of that has to do with what you do with film, and how you get that out and what has been done on YouTube and what has been done at BYU in a number of ways. It all contributes and all works together, hopefully, in being able to make it happen. It really is a little bit at a time. You're much stronger if you do a little bit at a time and make that work than if you try to do the grand slam, which we don't always make. The handcart pioneers were not giants, but boy they made a difference. They did the work. They walked all of those steps. Because they did that, we have a tradition and a heritage that is much stronger than it would have been had they all just been Brigham Young's. You can't get to those other levels unless you've built that foundation, and that foundation is built a little bit at a time as we go.